Michelle is a 2011 graduate of St. Michael's Academy. After attending Central High School in Springfield, she went on to Westfield State University where she is currently in her junior year. Majoring in psychology and criminal justice, she plans on obtaining her Ph.D. in clinical adolescent counseling and wants to work side by side with the police department to help youth who have experienced trauma. Michelle has come "full circle" in that she recently returned to SMA to do a clinical internship with SMA School Counselor Melissa Freeman.

On looking back at her years at St. Michael's Academy, Michelle recalls being a shy and quiet student. She is very grateful to her teachers for helping her to break out of her shell and encouraging her to participate in class. She has enjoyed returning and seeing some of the same teachers that now interact with her as a colleague.

"The teachers at St. Michael's were always nurturing but pushed you and helped you to grow. They made you feel like you were part of the school family. They wanted you to succeed," said Michelle. "I think Catholic education is different and it provides you with a tighter community where you feel comfortable. Many of the teachers here remembered my name even after so many years!"

"Having religion as part of the curriculum teaches you the basics of kindness, good manners and respect," she continues. "And the faith that you learn gives you something to lean on. I know I am never alone. My faith and going to church is important to me because it brings friends and family together and enhances your support system."

When Michelle is not studying, she enjoys playing the guitar, reading, being outside and spending time with family and friends. She is active in clubs at school and in her parish, Immaculate Conception where she teaches 3rd grade CCD and helps out with various events.

She currently works as a Behavioral Technician at AB Services of Western Mass in Springfield working with autistic children.